

Nina Rokat
[REDACTED]
Great Neck, New York [REDACTED]

April 18, 2016

Honorable Colleen McMahon
United States District Judge
Southern District of New York
United States Courthouse
500 Pearl Street
New York, New York 10007

Dear Judge McMahon,

My name is Nina Rokat and I am very proud to say Moshe Mirilashvili is my father.

I am the mother of a 24 year old daughter, Ashley Rokat, who is a first year law student at The Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. I am married for 26 years to David Rokat, a dentist whose practice is located on Long Island.

Also, I am a partner at Olshan Frome Wolosky LLP, a general practice law firm in New York City, consisting of approximately 85 attorneys. I began working at Olshan as a 2nd year associate and have been at the firm for 18 years. After 7 years at the firm, I was promoted to non equity partnership and 2 years after that, to equity partnership. I am the first woman in the firm's 50 plus year history to become an equity partner. A year after I became an equity partner, I was voted in by the partnership as a member of the firm's Executive Committee, which consists of 6 partners (myself included) and as 1 of the 2 co-administrative partners of the firm. The Executive Committee and 2 co-administrative partners manage the firm. I am the first and only woman in the firm's history to be a member of the Executive Committee and an administrative partner. In addition, I founded and chair the firm's Women's Committee (a leadership initiative for the firm's women attorneys and their clients), chair the firm's Hiring Committee and I am a member of the firm's Risk Management Committee.

I am who I am today directly as a result of my father and the pivotal role he has in my life. His life story, morals, teachings and character have inspired me tremendously and guided me in my life.

My father was born and raised in Georgia, which at that time was still a part of the Soviet Union. He and his family suffered immensely from religious persecution. In 1961, when my father was only 12, his father, a very prominent figure in the Georgian Jewish community, was imprisoned and executed directly as a result of Anti-Semitism. My father was then left with his young mother and 3 older siblings.

Fleeing the tragedy and hardship his family was faced with, my father immigrated to the United States when he was in his 20s. At that time, he was already married to my mother and had me (I was 2 at the time). As a young man, in addition to being responsible for his own young family, he took responsibility for his widowed mother, whom he brought with him to the U.S.

My father and his siblings were all licensed medical doctors in the Soviet Union. When my father and siblings arrived in the U.S. they all immediately began the process of becoming licensed medical doctors. Although my father's English was very poor, my father studied feverishly for his medical boards, which he ultimately passed. However, in the midst of his studies, my father worked very long and hard to earn a living. He worked many different jobs and was proud to be able to provide for us all. I don't recall all of the different jobs he had, but know that he drove a cab and worked in a prison, hospitals and nursing homes. He worked very long and hard all of the time. He always shared with me that nothing was beneath him and as long as he was earning an honest living, he would never have any shame in what he did. He had the responsibility of not only supporting his family and mother, but he also took it upon himself to provide financial assistance to my maternal grandparents, his mother in law and father in law, whom he insisted immigrate with him, because he would not leave them behind alone in Georgia. My father was always the protector and provider for our entire family.

My father and his siblings endured much hardship as new immigrants in the U.S. Although this hardship was far different than anything they were subjected to in the Soviet Union, it was hardship nonetheless. Attempting to together assimilate to a new world that was very foreign from what they knew to be home and raise and support each of their families, and together each pursuing becoming medical doctors in the U.S., made their already strong bond impenetrable.

My father's oldest sister passed away just this past July. Although my father was at that time already in a very bad place mentally and emotionally, because of his indictment, he put his issues aside and was the rock his family always knew and needed him to be. My father has another older sister, who is now 74 and an older brother who is 71. Unfortunately, both of his older siblings are very ill, especially his brother. They both, again especially his brother, rely upon him heavily and constantly for guidance and emotional support. They were traumatized by his indictment and are crushed by his incarceration – in essence reliving in their old and feeble age the nightmare they lived when they were teenagers when their father was taken from their home and sent to prison.

I grew up constantly hearing from my father the stories of unlawfulness, discrimination and prejudice he and his family endured in the Soviet Union. Those stories led me, when I was 12 years old, to decide to become a lawyer. I am the first in our family, and the first woman and second individual in the Georgian Jewish community in New York, to become a lawyer. My father laid for me the foundation and staunch belief in the importance of law. And he stood by my, supported me, and did everything he could to ensure I achieved my dream of becoming a lawyer. Although initially he assumed I would become a doctor like him, his siblings and my older cousins, he knew the fire he sparked in me was far too strong to not embolden.

My father has 2 daughters. I am the oldest. When I was younger, and to some degree, even to this day, men and women had very different roles in our culture and community; however, it was

always my father who instilled in me the strength, courage and faith to achieve what often times I thought was not within my reach. He always told me how he expected great things from me and how he expected me to rise up and be much more than what was expected of girls and women in our community. He was the one who always believed in me, even when I didn't always believe in myself. Through his actions, he taught by example. He taught me to work hard, really, really hard. He taught me to never give up. He taught me that as immigrants, we were given a true privilege and that we owed it to ourselves and this country to not let any hardship over come us and that I should give back to our community when I could, as he did. And he instilled in me the importance of family, faith and religion, all of which I always and especially now, rely upon heavily.

My father insisted that my sister and I attend yeshiva throughout all of elementary and middle schools. He certainly had to struggle, work even harder and save more to afford to pay our tuitions, but he was determined to have us grow up with religion in our lives. He wanted us to not only love our religion but it was his wish for us to be able to openly celebrate it, especially since he was unable to in Georgia.

I started yeshiva in the first grade. Although I should have been placed in the second grade because of how old I was, because my English was poor and I spoke no Hebrew, the school insisted, much to my father's dismay, that I be placed a year back. My father made sure I worked hard in school to get the best grades. I remember after about a couple of months after that first school year began, my father asked the school to reconsider my placement in the first grade, and move me up to the second grade, where I belonged. I don't recall how this came about but do recall one day, my father sitting in on a class. I recall the school teacher asking the class many questions about various subjects and me raising my hand to answer each and every question so that I can prove myself to the teacher and make my father proud. My father sat in on that class for an entire afternoon. I will never forget the smile on his face because he saw how hard I was working. At the end of that class, he walked over to the teacher and asked the teacher if she now believed I should be moved up - she did, and I was then immediately placed in the second grade.

Because of the long hours my father worked, I had limited time with him as a young child, but he always made every minute he did have with me the most incredible. I always cherished our time together. To this day, I remember what he would always say to me when I asked him why he had to work such long hours. His answer was - there are no short cuts in life. It is only through hard work, dedication and perseverance that anything is achieved. That is how I have always known my father to live his life.

He was taught me the importance of taking responsibility and charge of my own life, and helped me develop to become self-sufficient. I remember when I was a freshman in high school, I wanted to change schools. I asked him if I could. He said if I myself called up the school's headmaster, arranged for a meeting with him and complete and submitted the application to the school, he would then support my move. I remember vividly one afternoon calling the headmaster's assistant to schedule a meeting and the assistant praising me for making that call myself. And although at the time I was upset with my father because I wanted him to make the

call for me, I appreciate the reason he had me do it. He always wanted me to be able to stand on my own two feet.

I remember right before I was starting law school and my daughter had just turned 2, I was seriously considering taking time off between college and law school and being very fearful of how I would be able to go to law school and succeed and also, at the same time, be a good mother to a young child and a good wife to my husband, all at the age of 21. It was my father, and only my father, who understood and helped me work through my fear and made me believe I had the strength to succeed. He reminded me of all that we had already overcome as a family, as one unit, and that he and my mother would continue to be there for me every step of the way, as they were. He believed in my strength and passion and never wavered in his support. My father fully supported my husband and me financially during the first 5 years of our marriage. My mother raised my daughter and my father gave us money for food, paid the rent for our apartment in Queens, leased a car for us, and paid for our health insurance. He refused to let us work so we could both focus on our education. He also paid for my daughter's pre-schooling. He did all that he could for us, always.

Also, I remember when I was a junior to mid-level associate at Olshan, I came home crying one evening because the pressure of working long hours at a firm with challenging clients was too much to handle. I felt I was failing as a wife and mother. He said to me that evening - it's ok to cry, but make no decision that evening and call me in the morning. He called me early the next morning before work, and reminded me of all that I had already achieved and made me see things clearly. He reminded me that I am his daughter, and that we do not give up but rather, overcome. He said to me you cannot cut corners to success and also told me that through this difficulty would come great success, because he believed in me. Whether I was in the 2nd grade, starting law school or at an impasse in my career, knowing I had my father by my side always allowed me to reach my fullest potential and gave me the strength to breakthrough any difficulty that was ahead of me.

My sister and I grew up in Forest Hills, Queens. We lived in a 2 bedroom apartment with our parents on 62nd Road, off of Yellowstone Boulevard. Because I always had my family with me, I never grew up wanting for anything but we did live with real financial strain. It wasn't until I was a freshman in high school when my father began to become more secure financially. In my junior year in high school, my father opened up his first private office, a pain treatment center in Forest Hills. It was a storefront in an apartment building.

I remember being in high school and helping out in his office on the weekends and there being droves of people coming into the office asking my father for jobs and assistance and guidance. I didn't realize it at the time, but my father was the person in our community to go to for assistance.

My father would hire people based on their need, not his. I specifically recall asking him why he agreed to hire this woman who had recently emigrated from Russia, when he didn't need the help in the office. He told me he hired her because she needed a job. That was and is my father.

I recall on at least two separate occasions, when I was younger, people from our community calling him at our home for medical help and him running out in the middle of the night to assist. Those people have personally told me how my father actually saved each of their family member's lives. Again, that is my father.

A couple of years after opening his first office, my parents bought their very first home on Long Island. To this day, I remember my father telling me "you see Ninush (that's what he calls me) - this is the American dream". He would always tell me if you work hard enough and believe in yourself, you can achieve anything. That was an extremely proud moment for him and our entire family. As an immigrant, he was living the American dream. My father's work ethic never waned. From the time I can remember, this is a man who worked harder than anyone I knew. His extremely hard work continued when he opened his office on 162nd street after his medical licensing issues were finally cleared. Until the end, he would spend hours writing patient histories almost nightly. I know this because when I would call him on my way home from work every night (as I always did) he would tell me he was working on transcribing patients' histories. On weekends, when my sister and I would often ask to take he and my mother out to dinner, his response would be, please take your mom, but I can't make it because I have "so many histories to write".

My father is an incredibly good, selfless and caring man, who has tremendous compassion for others, especially when he believes they need assistance. You might find it difficult to believe how very much he cares and how very much he is willing to help unless you know him intimately.

When my father was first notified by the New York medical licensing board that he was under investigation, he didn't grasp the severity of what was happening. I had recently graduated from law school at that time and my father shielded me from this matter. I later learned that the investigation stemmed from alleged improper keeping of medical records. Rather than seek the appropriate legal representation, because he believed he had done nothing warranting sanction, he agreed to allow my cousin's wife, who had just also graduated from law school to represent him in the case because she needed a job and he wanted to help her, even though he had initially responded to the investigation without any legal representation.

My father is so very good at heart that he doesn't understand or detect when others may not be. He always tries to see the best in people. He is the utmost of optimists. He is trusting, often times to a fault. And unless you know my father, really know him, it may be very hard for you to believe who he truly is. People are so jaded they often assume the worst in people. Not my father. He is just the opposite. He always assumes the best - always.

When my father opened his office on 162nd street, he never asked me or anyone else for that matter to review his office lease. I was out of town on a business trip when I found out he had signed his lease. I asked him why he had not given the lease to me to review. He told me he didn't want to bother me. He also told me the landlord was a nice guy and didn't feel the need to have anyone review the lease because the landlord reviewed it with him and he felt comfortable based on that review. That is also my father.

After his arraignment on December 11, 2014, I drove my father home. It was just the two of us in the car. I didn't ask him much that evening, as we were both in a state of shock, but I did ask him why he hired Damon Leonard (I had met Damon for the first time that day) and he replied he was a nice young man who seemed to be lost and he wanted to help him. This was almost the same response he gave me 25 years earlier when I asked him why he had hired the woman who was an immigrant from Russia. That is my father.

From December 11, 2014, the day of my father's arrest, to March 17, 2016, the day of his conviction, my father's daily life consisted of painful shame, severe distress, massive indignation and self imposed confinement to his apartment. With very limited exception to visit his lawyers, my sister and I, attend his childhood friend's daughter's wedding, attend his nephew's son's bris and attend his sister's funeral and Shiva, my father did not leave his apartment during this 15 month period.

His incarceration has turned all of our lives upside down. I remain in a state of shock and do not understand how this has now become our reality. I fear what will happen to him. The idea of my father being in prison, especially at his age, is something that I do not know how to handle. I am 44 years old and to this day I call my father "Papiko", which in Georgian means "Daddy". I need my father. I really need him. This is the first time in my life when I do not have my father by my side, and that is terrifying. He and our entire family have been suffering and hurting immensely since the early morning of December 11, 2014. If you knew my father you would know he has already been punished beyond comprehension.

Your Honor, the crimes my father was convicted of are completely out of character for the man that I know. I beg for your mercy and leniency and I have faith in your compassion. Please allow me and my family the ability to take care of my father and bear responsibility for him so that the United States government does not unnecessarily have to.

I would be happy to speak with you to address any questions or concerns you may have.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Nina Roket